

from the annual examination to 627. Compared with the school rolls of the previous year, there was an increase in the attendance of 184 pupils. This amounts to barely two for each school, and does not equal the number of new attendants that ought to be shown by the ordinary increase of population in the district, without taking into consideration the steady inflow of population from outside districts during the past years. One can only account for the smallness of the increase by supposing the rapid extension of settlement and, as a consequence, that many children of school age in the remote portions of the district are receiving no education whatever.

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION.—A good deal has been done of late to meet the wants of the district in the matter of accommodation. The special building grants have helped very materially to bring about a much better feeling among Committees than was the case a few years ago. Much inconvenience is felt at Tokomaru Bay and at Mohaka from the absence of suitable buildings, but the fact that grants have been available for a year or more shows the existence of other causes in the supply of needful accommodation. Port Awanui and Wigan (Takapau) have been provided for, and the two large schools now being built, one in Gisborne and one on the Kaiti just outside the borough boundary of that town, will supply places for 700 pupils. Several applications have been made for the opening of schools within the Wairoa County, and inquiries are now being made as to the actual wants of the places concerned. To the south of Napier the most urgent demands have been met, and all the larger centres have sufficient places except Hastings, where accommodation is much needed for the large secondary classes of its district high school. Provision is also necessary at Hastings, Waipukurau, Dannevirke, and Woodville, under the manual and technical regulations, if manual training is to make successful headway in the work of the schools. The grant recently made to Waipawa will be of service, but full provision must be made in the places indicated, if special instruction under the manual and technical regulations is to be carried on satisfactorily.

CONDITION OF BUILDINGS.—Most of the school buildings may be classed as being in fair working-order. The plan of painting the interior of the schools equally with the exterior is a wise one, and will save the full cost of the work in a few years by the partial destruction of the wood-borer. Many of the schools present an attractive interior, and the effect upon teachers and children is obvious. One thing still remains to be done in the schools of the district. The old desks that have been in use for twenty years or more require to be replaced—for young children by a similar type of desk as is at present used, for children between Standards I and III inclusive, by dual desks, and for children above Standard III by the single desk. This arrangement is possible in all cases where there is an infant department, whilst in the smaller schools of the district the dual desk might be used without distinction. All teachers' residences require a careful overhaul, as in many cases repairs are badly needed. Teachers cannot obtain needful accommodation in either of these places, and they suffer serious privations in consequence. When visiting the Puketitiri School a short time ago, I found the schoolroom divided by a screen from floor to roof. On inquiring as to the cause, it appeared that one portion was used as a living-room and bedroom by the mistress and her paralytic son, no other accommodation being available in the settlement. The Committee had made the arrangements, and so anxious were they to have a residence that they offered £10 and 2,000 ft. of timber towards making the needful house provision. The position at Waipiro is more harassing, but the case related will suffice to show some of the real hardships experienced by teachers who take up duties in the outlying parts of the district. No wonder that teachers are hard to obtain for country schools, and the difficulties will increase unless the people themselves assist teachers to obtain some of the home comforts of a country life. The school-grounds continue to receive much careful attention. Without wishing to place schools in competition with one another, it must be said to the credit of the Committees, teachers, and children in Poverty Bay that the school-grounds are better kept, and the cultivation of flowers is more fostered than in the schools further southwards. The idea is fast taking hold of the people that, if nature-study is to form part of school training, much of the work must be done in the vicinity of the school; hence the school-grounds, equally with the schoolroom, must be used for the instruction of the children. The view is a correct one, and the more we can associate the beautiful and useful in the training of pupils the better will be their ideals in after life.

EXAMINATION TABLES.—The accompanying tabulation contains the number of pupils according to standard classes who were attending the schools at the time of my annual visit. The figures include pupils belonging to the senior classes of the four district high schools. These appear under Class VII in the tabulation, which also includes the Seventh Standard children from other than the district high schools:—

Classes.	Number on Roll.	Number present at Examination.	For Corresponding Period, 1904.		Average Age, 1905.
			Number on Roll.	Number present.	
Standard VII	146	139	160	136	14·6
" VI	782	565	511	502	14·0
" V	784	750	829	803	13·1
" IV	1,118	1,074	983	948	12·2
" III	1,080	1,041	1,162	1,102	11·2
" II	1,160	1,103	1,077	1,034	10·0
" I	1,127	1,050	1,164	1,114	8·8
Total	5,997	5,722	5,886	5,639	11·11
Preparatory pupils ...	2,868	2,516	2,795	2,494	7·5
Grand totals	8,865	8,238	8,681	8,133	11·4
Catholic schools	598	549	645	575	...